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# Principle of Respect for Law Is Praised by the President

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President Reagan paid tribute yesterday to the principle of respect for law amid controversy stirred by a refusal to accept international jurisdiction over legal disputes regarding U.S. actions in Central America.

During a Rose Garden ceremony attended by administration officials, members of Congress and Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, Reagan designated May 1 as "Law Day USA" and hailed a 200-year-old "partnership between law and liberty."

"Without law, there can be no freedom, only chaos and disorder," Reagan said in a written presidential proclamation. "And without freedom, law is but a cynical veneer for injustice and oppression."

In totalitarian societies, Reagan said, May 1 will be marked by "sad and artificial celebrations of the revolution that enslaved the very people it promised to liberate."

"We in the United States have been blessed to live in a land where

law and freedom are found not simply in a constitution and a bill of rights, but in our daily lives," Reagan said.

The ceremony was held as Reagan came under attack from Democrats who suggested the administration might be violating the law by providing secret CIA backing to rebels waging a war of harassment against the Nicaraguan government.

Anticipating a move by Nicaragua to take the matter of alleged CIA-aided mining of two key ports to the International Court of Justice at The Hague, the administration announced Sunday that it will not recognize the court as a valid judge of disputes regarding Central America for the next two years.

The State Department and White House contended that other countries, including communist nations, have taken similar action to head off controversy before the court. The action is a first for the United States and was condemned by some critics of the president.